7: Thompson--377 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 484, 815, 177.81 France
636.81

"Laos has offered a rich field to scientists. Henri Mouhot was its first scientific explorer, and he was followed by others, chiefly zoologists. The Lagrée Mission continued this work, as did Dr. Harmand, who made a great collection there on his 1872-78 series of explorations. Pierre's work on the forest flora of Laos has been perhaps the greatest single scientific achievement."

7: Thompson--367 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 484, 654

"Not until 1889, when Pavie was given a semi-official mission and numerous collaborators to study the economic possibilities of the upper country, did France's interest there re-awaken. Despite Siamese opposition the mission was able to obtain precise and exhaustive information about the country, all the way from Yunnan to Cambodia, for the government and the newly formed French Commercial Syndicate of Upper Laos."

10: d'Orleans--262 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 167, 484, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"We accept an offer from a Thai family encamped upon a sand bank, who invite us to warm ourselves at their fire. We begin to talk and find that our hosts were forcibly deported from the plain of Dien Bien, and that, after ten years' absence, they are returning to their home. They have a pirogue and a raft made of bamboos tied together, which carries their animals, fowls and pigs; we leave them after buying some cocoa-nuts which they have brought from the south."

23: Franck--297 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 484, 493, 501

"There were two Fords in Luang Prabang, that which had come for me at Don-mo and one belonging to the king. It would of course have been bad manners for the commissaire openly to emphasize his real bosshood by sporting the better car; besides, the garage mechanics of the capital are as inexperienced as filling-stations are rare; hence the transportation that had been placed at my disposal lacked something of the regality of its rival, particularly in the matter of diligent polishing. There were also some horses, a few elephants, several victorias, even three or four rickshaws, though these, except perhaps that of the king inside the palace grounds, might as well not have been imported, for there were no men in this languid Eden both able and willing to pull them. Nearly every one walks in Luang Prabang, barefooted and silent, unless he travels by boat. For the most important conveyances are the long narrow pirogues, some of them surprisingly large, hollowed out of single tree-trunks, which ply the Mekong and the Nam-khan that flows into it above the town. On the bow of each boat there is almost sure to be a bouquet of flowers, a pretty custom, even if it is probably based on a superstition, and one in keeping with this gentle people of a land so kindly treated by nature."

23: Franck--341 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 484, 501

"Down this shot now and then a man with only a loin-cloth over his tattooed thighs, riding a little green bamboo raft, the only part of the craft above water being a raised place for a bundle of a few clothes and other belongings, and a jackfruit for possible hunger."

68: Mouhot--110 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 484, 776, 823, 579

"As for the Laotians, I have found them, although superstitious, very courageous, especially those who traverse this forest [HD: i.e. Dong Phya Phia, the forest of the 'King of Fire', between Khao-Khoc and Korat in Siam] eight or ten times a year. Some of them even venture to awake the 'King of Fire' by bringing down game or shooting at robbers: yet death , even in the best season, carries off one or two out of every ten who travel here. I think the number of those who fall victims to this terrible journey must be considerable in the rainy season, when every torrent overflows its bounds; the whole soil is soaked, the pathways nothing but bogs, and the rice-grounds covered with several feet of water. After five or six days' walking through all this, with feet in the mud, the body in a profuse perspiration, and breathing a fetid atmosphere, hot as a stove and reeking with putrid miasma, what wonder that many sink and die?"

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

accustomed to use when asking potential converts if they were willing to accept Christianity. Thus, by his linguistic industry, the Father had done no more than bring his religion into secret ridicule; while the Meos, at least, are not likely to have felt anything other than slight bewilderment at the evangelist's quite unintelligible discourse.

Laos, they said at Saigon, was happily free from those disorders that made travel so chancy in the rest of Indo-China. The only difficulty was getting to Laos. Once you got there all was well, and there was nothing to stop you going about the country as much as you liked.

This account proved to be cruelly fictitious. You left Vientiane in the same way as you came — by plane. Either that, or you waited an indefinite time for the military convoy which provisioned Xien-Khouang in the north and the posts between — islands in perilous seas. The only way to get to Luang Prabang, the second of the ancient capitals of the country, which was about 300 miles away up the Mekong — or about 250 miles across country — was by one of the occasional motor pirogues. It now remained to find out what were the possibilities of making the trip in this way.

Providing myself with a Chinese interpreter — the pirogues being, of course, Chinese owned — I went down to the river. By walking a mile or two along the thirty-feet-deep bank you came to a place where the main stream floundered over from the Siamese side, so that a few barely connected stagnant puddles lay directly beneath. In one of these the pirogue lay, cracking in the sun and seemingly abandoned. It was an ugly, shapeless craft; a small junk, with its deck-space entirely covered over with a kind of hutment, so that travellers were confined to a stinking semi-darkness for the duration of their journey. It was arranged so that air and light could be kept out by the lowering of rush-matting screens over the few apertures in the sides.

A few corpse-like figures lay strewn about the fore-shore and the

appointment /256/ as second-class vice-consul in Luang-Prabang 175*
with the duty "of seeking means of communication joining the 654
regions whose possession we claim to Annam and Tonkin." After
a stay of only three and a half months in France he returned to
Bangkok in the following March, impatient to turn his dream into
a reality, but he had reckoned without the ill will of the Siamese
authorities.

Provisory agreement of May 7, 1886. On May 7, 1886 a 648*
provisory agreement was signed sanctioning the creation of the 175*
French vice-consulate, but a clever draft of the agreement im-
plicitly recognized, as a guarantee, Siam's authority over the
Laotian principality. The Bangkok government flattered itself
that it would obtain the ratification of this act before the repre-
sentative of the Republic reached his post, and that the latter's
role would therefore be limited to defining the limits of "Siamese
Laos." The Quai d'Orsay had become more circumspect, however,
and reserved its /257/ acceptance until it received the first re-
ports of its representative (1). Thus Pavie was refused his exequatur

1. Pavie's recommendations and the dramatic events of June 1887 caused all notions of ratification to be abandoned.

and had to set forth "as a simple traveler" after waiting six months
for his passports -- just the time needed by the Chao-Meun to ful-
fill his mission in every particular. Pavie then had to take the
longest route by way of Xieng-Mai, where his progress was further
delayed for two months while the elephants necessary for his convoy
were collected.

FIRST PAVIE MISSION (1887-1889).

He did not reach Luang-Prabang until February 10, 1887, ac- 484
companied by eight Cambodians who showed themselves to be com- 648*
panions of the utmost fidelity and devotion (recruited for the most 175*
part, however, in a single day at Pnom-Penh) and by a Siamese
functionary "Whose duty it was to assist him in his relations with
the authorities of the country." Scarcely had he arrived before he
fell under the charm "of this delicate landscape which suddenly 000
takes on development through the action of a restfully gentle light."
From the right bank, where he proposed to build his dwelling, he
did not tire of admiring "the most /258/ beautiful site in Laos,

[114] of what has been observed, and because no better expression of the facts could be hoped for.

THE THAI RACE

142 144 "Laotians. Of all the Thais, the Laotian is the one who has remained the purest, although he has a much higher proportion of Aryan blood than the other varieties, with the exception of the Lus. Fairly tall in stature, his hair cut short, elegant in his movements and more refined than all the other inhabitants of the land, he is the aristocratic type of Laos. His upbringing, his education, his religion and even his vices have a mark of distinction which make them stand out above those of his neighbors. An excellent boatman, 438 and a trader rather than a farmer, he is the one who seems the master 505 of the land, as much by virtue of his commercial aptitudes as by the ease with which he ranges the country. Mounted on his long and 484 narrow shaped pirogue, made in one piece of a tree trunk hollowed out by fire, he goes great distances to visit peoples of the most varied races [175] [Illustration] [176] [Blank page] [177] and serves as a link between all the human varieties which populate Laos. He is at home and at his ease everywhere, standing out clearly above all his countrymen in this respect.

[361] "The Laotian prefers to settle along navigable watercourses and in proximity to plains of ricefields. He is glad to have his land [241] worked by mercenaries or by dependents of inferior race, and some- [567] times by slaves (at least before our arrival). He himself, with quite an extensive knowledge of the needs and resources of the other inhabitants of the land, particularly likes to traffic in all kinds of merchandise. He it is who goes to buy forest products and cereal grains on the spot from the mountainfolk or from sedentary farmers, and sells them cloth, salt, tobacco, earthenware, farming implement [439] etc. in exchange. He it is who exports the products of Laos to neighboring countries and brings back the things which Laotian industry cannot produce. His business as a commercial traveler, which he likes and which gives him a good standard of living, occupies him for only a few months of the year but brings him into contact with all the neighboring peoples and also with the Europeans and Chinese in the Siamese, Annamite and Cochinchinese trading posts. Thence arises his veneer of civilization which strikes one at first glance.

505 438 Large quantities of nep (rice suitable for making alcohol), hides, horn, cardamom, wax, benzoin, various gums, etc. were shipped from Bassac, from Pakse, from Savannakhet, from Vien-Tiane and from other Laotian centers which had formerly traded exclusively with Bangkok by way of the Nongkay-Outaradit route on the Menam and by the Korat route on the Se-Moun.

505 484 "Passenger traffic, which was almost nil when the new services were established, is increasing every day. The natives are beginning to become familiar with this rapid, convenient and inexpensive manner of traveling which the steamship represents and they are making more frequent use thereof, a fact which can only contribute to the broadening of relations between the various posts scattered along the great river and increase trade in their products of all kinds" (1).

(1) See, in Appendix XXX, the transport rates between France and Indo-China and between Saigon and Laos.

[487] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER XI
1. SOCIAL STATUS. SLAVERY

[565] Upon our arrival in Laos, we found a hierarchial society comprised of nobles, commoners and slaves. We could not do better than 567 to preserve all features of the political, social and administrative organization just as it had been. In this respect we took our inspira- 178 tion from our predecessors the Siamese, leaving our new subjects the utmost liberty and respecting their traditions, customs and mores in- 177 sofar as these were compatible with our own institutions.

Thus we were at times forced to recall certain native officials who had compromised themselves with the Siamese, or who through their exactions had made themselves unworthy of their office. Moreover, we have always acted tactfully and mildly, [488] leaving the choice of officials to election, in accordance with custom.

But above all, we took radical measures by completely suppressing the slave trade and by regularizing a very mild form of slavery for debt.

[556] There used to be slavery in Laos, as in Siam, in the form of slavery by capture, by purchase and for debt. It yielded high profits for those who engaged in the traffic, for the children and grandchildren of slaves were slaves themselves at birth, a fact which increased the fortunes of their masters to that extent.

65]
659 it possible to draw up the tax rolls for the following year.

657 A head tax is owed by every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and sixty, except for bonzes, pagoda servants, the native authorities, men who have served for four years in the civil guard, militiamen on active duty, invalids and liberated slaves.

There are four categories of registered persons:

1. Those of the great Thai race, who pay five francs and also owe twenty days of service in kind in Upper Laos, and ten in Lower Laos. This service may be redeemed upon payment of five francs;

2. Those of the other races such as Khas, Meos, Yaos, etc., who pay 2.50 francs and owe ten days of service in kind, redeemable for 2.50 francs;

3. The Annamites, who pay a head tax of five francs and do not owe any service in kind;

4. Foreign Orientals, who pay a head tax of 12.50 francs per year and do not owe any statute labor. If they are merchants, they pay a license fee of five francs per shop.

[500] B. Indirect taxes

The indirect taxes include:

1. Travel permits and passports;
2. Permits for weapons;
3. Administrative fines;
4. Local taxes levied on products and animals exported from Laos.

[484] For travel permits, Laotians pay a fixed fee of 0.50 franc per person and per permit. Foreign Orientals pay 1.875 francs for a permit which is good for three months.

[411] Permits for weapons occasion the collection of a tax of 1.50 francs. Annual renewal of the permit is obligatory, and costs 0.75 franc.

[421] There are as yet no taxes on land in Laos. It would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to levy such a tax in view of the present state of the country, which has no land registry, and with the system of property (1) such as it exists at present.

423 (1) "As regards public domain, we have maintained the custom which is consecrated by the local laws and usages. By virtue of these usages and these laws, the State is sole proprietor of the land and everything under it, without any exception, no matter how it is being exploited or what establishments have been made there,